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TDA, UT MARTIN PARTNER TO IMPROVE CATTLE HEALTH WITH MOBILE UNIT

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – State Agriculture Commissioner Ken Givens and University of Tennessee at Martin officials today announced a new partnership for improving cattle management and health in West Tennessee.

The partnership was marked with the unveiling of a mobile, high-tech trailer that will be managed by the university for the purpose of demonstrating proper cattle handling and health practices. The MobilCattleDoc™ is a 24-foot long, 8-foot tall trailer that can be pulled to virtually any location and is equipped with a hydraulic chute and other equipment for safely and efficiently handling and holding cattle.

“This mobile cattle handling unit will be an important tool for educating and demonstrating proper cattle management and care,” said Givens. “By helping producers understand and practice better management techniques, we can help improve the quality, add value and increase the marketability of Tennessee cattle. We’re proud to partner with UT Martin to deliver this service to West Tennessee cattle producers.”

“The Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources at UT Martin is proud to have the opportunity to partner with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture to make this unit available for teaching and demonstrations in our region of the state,” said Dr. Jerry Gresham, UT Martin Agriculture Department chair. “The unit will be used in animal health and livestock management classes at UT Martin, and we also are pleased to be able to assist the Tennessee Extension Service in providing timely training to beef producers of our region by delivering and setting the unit up for their educational programs.”

The mobile cattle-handling trailer was funded by the Tennessee Department of Agriculture from the Tennessee Agricultural Enhancement Program (TAEP), which was established in 2005 by Gov. Phil Bredesen and approved by the Tennessee General Assembly. The aim of the TAEP is to help improve animal health and cattle production, and to encourage farm diversification in Tennessee.

The \$47,000 specially designed trailer will be stationed at and maintained by UT Martin when it is not being used at farms, field days, cattle sales and shows for educational and demonstration purposes. One unique feature of the trailer is that its wheels hydraulically retract, allowing the trailer to sit directly on the ground for easy access.

“The Mobiledoc is high quality, animal friendly, mobile cattle handling facility that will help producers

realize how safe and easy cattle processing can be,” said Charlie Rowlett, UT Martin director of Ned McWherter Agricultural Complex. “With EID becoming more important in every beef cattle operation and the known value enhancement that comes with proper vaccinations and identification, this should be a great tool for the western region of Tennessee.”

“Having a mobile unit in West Tennessee also serves an important homeland security and animal disease control function,” said Givens. “In the event of an animal disease outbreak, this unit can be quickly deployed to any location where it’s needed for the treatment and handling of cattle by animal health officials.”

The Department of Agriculture also plans to place a mobile cattle-handling trailer in East and Middle Tennessee in partnership with Middle Tennessee State University and Walter State Community College.

Cattle and calves are the largest generator of farm income in Tennessee, accounting for about \$500 million annually in farm cash receipts according to the Tennessee Field Office of the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service.

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